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Rubella / German Measles 1996 Case Definition | CDC  
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April 16, 2021  
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Rubella / German Measles  
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NOTE:  
A surveillance case definition is a set of uniform criteria used to define a disease for public health surveillance. Surveillance case definitions enable public health officials to classify and count cases consistently across reporting jurisdictions. Surveillance case definitions are not intended to be used by healthcare providers for making a clinical diagnosis or determining how to meet an individual patient’s health needs.  
Clinical Description  
An illness that has all the following characteristics:  
Acute onset of generalized maculopapular rash  
Temperature greater than 99.0°F (greater than 37.2°C), if measured  
Arthralgia/arthritis, lymphadenopathy, or conjunctivitis  
Laboratory Criteria For Diagnosis  
Isolation of rubella virus,  
OR  
Significant rise between acute- and convalescent-phase titers in serum rubella immunoglobulin G antibody level by any standard serologic assay,  
OR  
Positive serologic test for rubella immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibody  
Case Classification  
Suspected  
Any generalized rash illness of acute onset  
Probable  
A case that meets the clinical case definition, has no or noncontributory serologic or virologic testing, and is not epidemiologically linked to a laboratory-confirmed case  
Confirmed  
A case that is laboratory confirmed or that meets the clinical case definition and is epidemiologically linked to a laboratory-confirmed case  
Comments  
Serum rubella IgM test results that are false positives have been reported in persons with other viral infections (e.g., acute infection with Epstein-Barr virus [infectious mononucleosis], recent cytomegalovirus infection, and parvovirus infection) or in the presence of rheumatoid factor. Patients who have laboratory evidence of recent measles infection are excluded.  
Related Case Definition(s)  
Rubella / German Measles | 2025 Case Definition  
Rubella / German Measles | 2013 Case Definition  
Rubella / German Measles | 2010 Case Definition  
Rubella / German Measles | 2009 Case Definition  
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NNDSS receives and shares case data from state, local, and territorial health departments to help public health monitor, control, and prevent serious diseases.  
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